

FIRST RESPONSE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Meeting Date: April 28, 2025, 6 p.m., Trousdale County Courthouse

Present: Amber Russell, Chris Gregory, Shane Burton, David Nollner, Judy Kerr, Steve Whittaker, Linda Sue Bruce, Brian Crook

Others Present: Amy Thomas, Wayland Cothron, Ken Buckmaster, Lonnie Giese, Dusty Cato, Fire Chief Mark Beeler, Gina Duncan, Timmy Moore, Matt Batey, Bud Sutherland, County Mayor Jack McCall, Sheriff Ray Russell, two unidentified EMT employees

Chairman Amber Russell called the meeting to order.

Minutes of the March 24, 2025 meeting were reviewed. **Motion to approve by Bruce, second by Burton. Motion approved.**

Motion to set agenda by Nollner, second by Gregory. Motion approved.

Director Matt Batey presented EMS report. Batey noted county is unable to get federal funding to convert sheriff station on Broadway because it is in floodplain. No plans for weather sirens because of limited range and reverse 911 system is more effective. Chief Deputy Cothron explained how to subscribe to reverse 911. Bruce asked about ways to advertise this capability to public. Chairman Russell asked about community center as shelter, Fire Chief Beeler explained that building is designed as a shelter after an event for those in need, not as a shelter during an event. Committee reviewed March EMS report. Gregory asked if ambulance remount was in 2026 proposed budget; Batey said yes. Batey noted future construction at Trousdale Medical Center that will temporarily impact entrance and exit to facility.

Fire Chief Mark Beeler presented fire report to committee. Brush truck repair anticipated done by end of the month, pumpers were recertified in March. Fire has received \$11,800 Enbridge grant for upgraded radios, gas detection meters and gated hydrant valves. Fire hall interior has been newly repainted, stripping and waxing floors to be done in coming days along with cleaning carpets. Beeler noted building is 10 years old but holding up well. Beeler said 2026 budget will propose increase from \$30 to \$50 per call for volunteers, was asked for last year and not approved. Fire has seen no pay increase since 2016, Beeler noted. Would apply to Rescue Squad also.

Motion to move fire/rescue pay increase to Budget Committee with favorable recommendation by Gregory, second by Bruce. Motion approved.

Timmy Moore presented Rescue Squad report. Department received state grant for \$52,100, getting quotes for turnout gear. RS will seek another such grant to service its radios. RS members preparing for swift water training, has three new applicants undergoing review process. Building update - TDOT has fixed its side of building to help remedy flooding issues, county end still needs some work. Moore noted 2026 budget has \$11,200 increase from previous year, \$57,626 total proposal. Gregory noted March minutes said RS was having trouble finding swift water training and whether enough funding was in place for training, asked if issues had been addressed. Moore said they have as TARS membership reduces cost of the training.

Sheriff Ray Russell presented department report. New camera systems being added at sheriff station, courthouse and jail. New body cams for deputies coming through three-year lease program with Axon, estimated \$17,000 annual cost. Current cameras working but new tech will make newer ones better.

Sheriff spoke with engineer regarding Gravel Hill radio tower, plans have been advanced to electrician and will then go out for bid.

TCSD has hired four new dispatchers, one moved from jail. Four females hired at jail, three deputies left for other jobs in last month. Sheriff will seek 10 percent pay increase for TCSD employees in 2026 budget, noted other counties are giving 5 percent annual raises and Trousdale has fallen behind other departments. County gave 2.5 percent increase in 2025, but after insurance cost increase that effective number was 0.9 percent, per sheriff. Batey noted EMS is falling behind also and will seek similar increase for 2026 budget. Employees also concerned about potential cut of holiday pay, could be \$2,000 to \$4,000 per employee, per sheriff. Gregory asked what 10 percent increase would cost, sheriff did not have that number available.

Nollner asked about license plate readers; they are up and running now and have already helped solve some crimes, per sheriff. More cameras being sought for highways in 2026, along with three patrol cars and work crew vehicle. TDOT will begin paying county to pick up litter on state highways, \$21,600 annually.

Cothron presented call report for last 30 days. 1,422 calls, 10 crashes, 72 citations, 44 booked into jail, released 50 people from jail, 33 animals at large, 322 traffic calls, 10 TDOC prisoner transports. Kerr asked if TC is reimbursed for prisoner transports, Cothron said no. Sheriff noted hidden costs from prison, estimated 100 cases current in Trousdale court system from TTCC.

Chairman Russell noted resolution to approve TCSD to conduct actuarial study for TCRS retirement extra pay was on April Commission agenda and would be voted on that evening.

Other comments: Crook noted opposition to proposal to cut holiday pay, estimated 52 cent to \$1 hour effective reduction in pay if this passes. Gregory noted his agreement with Crook in opposing this plan.

Next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 27 at 6 p.m.

Motion to adjourn by Crook, second by Gregory. Motion approved.

Minutes presented by Chris Gregory.